

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON THURSDAY 26 JUNE 2014,
AT 10.30 AM

PRESENT: **Employer's Side**

Councillors M Alexander, A Jackson, J Ranger
and J Thornton

Staff Side (UNISON)

Mr A Stevenson (Chairman)
Mr S Ellis

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Emma Freeman	- Head of People and Property Services

1 **ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report on the Absence Management Policy which had been updated to reflect changes in legislation in terms of the Equality Act 2010 and best practice. The policy was linked with a number of the Council's health and safety and human resource policies and provided a definition of absence, disability absence and HR's responsibilities in managing attendance including recording absence.

The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained the new sickness absence trigger points, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

Councillor J Ranger expressed concern regarding the need to report sickness by 10am if an employee fell ill whilst on holiday. He commented that this might be extremely difficult to achieve in terms of time zone differences and suggested that reporting a sickness on the first day was a more reasonable approach. This was supported.

Councillor Ranger referred to paragraph 16.4 (fourth bullet point) stating that this should read “third meeting” rather than “second” and queried why a Final Written Warning would be necessary if the employee was progressing. The Secretary to the Employer’s Side acknowledged that there might be progress, but that the Final Written Warning would be kept on the file and may be used as a future “trigger”.

Councillor J Ranger suggested that in relation to the “Director Checklist for Termination” that the name “SERCO” be deleted from the 6th bullet point on the grounds that this may change. This was supported.

The Panel supported the report, as now amended.

RECOMMENDED – that the Policy, as set out in Essential Reference Paper “B” of the report submitted, and now amended, be approved.

2 **DISCIPLINARY POLICY REVIEW**

The Secretary to the Employer’s Side submitted a report following a review of the Council’s Disciplinary Policy, which had been last reviewed in 2009. The Secretary to the Employer’s Side explained that the policy had been updated in line with the Council’s Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy and best practice. Some types of misconduct had also been added (i.e. inappropriate use of social media and instant messenger systems).

In response to a query from Councillor J Ranger, the

Secretary to the Employer's Side provided clarification of paragraph 12.5.4 (Role of the Companion or Representative). Councillor A Jackson suggested that the representative should either be certified by UNISON or from UNISON (Region). He suggested that the wording should be modified to reflect this. This was supported.

Councillor Ranger suggested that the last bullet point under 8 (Acts of Misconduct) should be amended by the inclusion of "deliberate sabotaging" as anyone could mistakenly introduce a virus into the system. This was supported.

In response to a query from Councillor A Jackson, the Secretary to the Employer's Side explained the process involved in updating reports.

Councillor M Alexander referred to actions which might be gross misconduct including driving with an excess of penalty points. The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that this could be processed in terms of managing performance in that they would not be able to perform their role or through the disciplinary process.

The Panel supported the report, as now amended.

RECOMMENDED – that the Policy, as set out in Essential Reference Paper "B" of the report submitted, and now amended, be approved.

3 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor A Jackson and seconded by Councillor M Alexander that Councillor L Haysey be appointed as Chairman for the civic year 2014/15.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, Councillor L Haysey was appointed Chairman of the Local Joint Panel for the civic year 2014/15.

It was moved by Councillor M Alexander and seconded by

Councillor A Jackson that Andrew Stevenson (UNISON) be appointed Vice Chairman for the civic year 2014/15.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, Andrew Stevenson was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Local Joint Panel for the civic year 2014/15.

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman chaired the meeting.

RESOLVED – that Councillor L Haysey and Andrew Stevenson (UNISON), be appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively, for the civic year 2014/15.

4 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor L Haysey and Fiona Brown (UNISON). It was noted that Councillor J Ranger was substituting on behalf of Councillor L Haysey.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2014 be approved by the Chairman as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 EXPENSES POLICY

The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that there had recently been a grievance which had subsequently resulted in the Investigating Officer making a number of recommendations to the Expenses Policy report in relation to "exceptional circumstances classification for essential" car users and the need for this to be more clearly defined. The Secretary to the Employer's Side requested that, in the circumstances, the report be withdrawn.

Councillor A Jackson and J Ranger felt that the "essence" of the policy had not changed and suggested that the report be recommended for approval by the Local Joint Panel with

Human Resources making any further amendments as necessary.

The Panel Vice-Chairman stated that the Secretary to the Employer’s Side needed an opportunity to consult further on the proposed changes (including with UNISON).

The Panel agreed to withdraw the report and asked that an additional meeting of the Local Joint Panel be arranged in August 2014 to consider the matter.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be withdrawn; and

(B) an additional meeting of the Local Joint Panel be convened to reconsider the matter.

The meeting closed at 11.10 am

Chairman
Date